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ABSTRACT

Data were collected at a 15 year class reunion of 100 graduates of a work study program for educable mentally retarded students in the North Kansas City Public Schools. Ss were interviewed personally by one of their former teachers or the vocational adjustment coordinator. Among findings were the following: 64% had their own automobile: 56% lived with their parents, 30% rented, and 12% owned their own homes: 99% were employed with 8% in sheltered workshops, and 3% unemployed: and types of occupations included food service (N=27), homemakers (N=12), assembly line (N=12), clerical (N=10), maintenance (N=9), sheltered workshop (N=8), transportation (N=8), welding (N=6), and personal services (N=5). Results of the program with school, parent, community support appear to be satisfactory. (SBH)

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# A FIFTEEN YEAR FOLLOW UP STUDY OF THE NORTH KANSAS CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL WORK STUDY GRADUATES 1966 - 1980

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The workstudy program for the educable mentally retarded students in the North Kansas City Public Schools began in 1965. The first full time vocational adjustment coordinator was hired that year to serve the students in two senior high schools: the North Kansas City High School and Oak Park High School. Five years later Winnetonka High School was added to the vocational adjustment coordinators duties.

The North Kansas City School District is the third largest school district by student population in the State of Missouri. It is a middle to high income area and has over six hundred major companies and corporations within the school district boundaries making it fertile ground for job placement possibilities for the workstudy student.

The three senior high schools have workstudy programs for the educable mentally retarded students. The intelligence quotient range originally mandated in the early 1960's was a Stanford-Binet or Wechsler Scale IQ of from 48 to 78; later the State law was changed to reflect both subaverage intelligence scores and impaired adaptive behavior, however, the the general range of intelligence quotients for the students admitted to the workstudy program over the years has been within the intelligence quotient range of 50 to 75 as a rough indicator of the classification of the subjects used in this report.

Since the beginning of the workstudy program in the North Kansas City Public School System over three hundred graduates have emerged. This report sampled one hundred of those students both for the fun of having a reunion and to collect data on the workstudy students for feedback for the program.

Letters were sent to all graduates of the workstudy program inviting them to attend a fifteen year class reunion. At the end of each school year our graduates are invited to attend a picnic in the local park shelter house. Because our graduates would feel at home at such a gathering, that location was selected as the place of choice for our reunion. The attendance at the first picnic was very good, however, as information from our alumni streamed in, the decision to have a second meeting grew to gather those persons who were working or newly located so that we could increase our sample size and follow up on good old ---.

Our graduates were interviewed personally by one of their "old" teachers or vocational adjustment coordinator. The graduates spoke freely and frankly and the interviewers felt the information given was accurate, interesting and most useful. The graduates brought their spouses and children to the meeting and, in a few cases, the parents of the graduates also dropped in to visit.

The presentation of the data will be given in a format which we hope will reflect a continuation of the relaxed atmosphere of that picnic rather than in the usual clinical type report.

## DATA

Of the 100 students sampled, there were 62 males and 38 females.

| THE SUBJECTS SAMPLED | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1966-70 | 1971-75 | 1976-80 | Total |
| Males | 7 | 21 | 34 | 62 |
| Females | 12 | 11 | 15 | 38 |
| Totals | 19 | 32 | 49 | 100 |

The sample, although not a stratified selection, does roughly represent the enrollment patterns in the workstudy program within the three 5-year intervals.

| MARITAL STATUS OF THE SUBJECTS | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Single | | Married | | Divorced | | Remarried | |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 1966-70 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 1971-75 | 12 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| 1976-80 | 30 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 44 | 20 | 18 | 18 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

A total of 64 percent of our sample remained single, 44 of the male subjects and 20 of the female subjects. A total of 36 percent of the sample entered into marital bliss; 11 percent bailed out with 3 percent being remarried. Three marriages involved both partners being in the workstudy program. The other 30 marriages involved a regular class student.

During the course of general conversation, our graduates often encouraged the teachers to "tell us while we are in school about the problems involved in marriage." This request came from a great majority of the married, divorced and the remarried subjects. Their concerns, in order of gravity were: relatives (particularly parents), economics, and intercommunications.

| CHILDREN PRODUCED BY SAMPLE | |
|---|---|
| 1966-70 | 15 |
| 1971-75 | 10 |
| 1976-80 | 10 |
| Total | 35 |

The children produced by the 36 married individuals number 35. Many of the graduates brought their children with them to the reunion. All of the parents expressed both pride and joy in their children. Of the 35 children, only 5 were attending special education classes. The 3 marriages of special education students resulted in 3 of those placements, however, they produced 7 children from their marriages. Many of the children are too young to attend school. Most of the parents expressed delight in the prospects of sending their children to school; none expressed interest in being a teacher and told us so.

| CHILDREN PER FAMILY UNIT | | | | | | Families |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Children | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 1966-70 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| 1971-75 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| 1976-80 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| TOTALS | 17 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 33 |

The 33 families (which includes the 3 set of workstudy parents) include a majority of families without children (17), 4 families with one child, 6 families with two children, 4 families with three children and 2 families with four children. The number of children produced by our workstudy graduates is below both the national average for the normal intelligenced peers and even below the average for gifted persons.

Of the 11 students divorced, 6 children were involved. One of those children is the child of a male who remarried. One male and one female care for their 2 children as single parents. One male divorcee supports his 1 child.

| HOUSING | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | RENTS | | OWNS | | PARENTS | | RESIDENTIAL HOME | |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 1966-70 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 1971-75 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| 1976-80 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 29 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTALS | 17 | 13 | 5 | 7 | 39 | 17 | 1 | 1 |
| | 30% | | 12% | | 56% | | 2% | |

All of the married subjects either owned or were renting homes. Only 8 single subjects were renting homes, all the rest were staying with their parents. Of the 1966-70 males and females, about 33% were still staying in their parents home. Almost half of the 1971-75 subjects were still in their parents home. And as would be expected, almost 66% of the 1976-80 subjects were staying at their parents home. Four of the females married males much older than themselves accounting for home ownership.

| AUTOMOBILE OWNERSHIP | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Owns Automobile | | No Automobile | |
| | Males | Females | Male | Females |
| 1966-70 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 5 |
| 1971-75 | 16 | 7 | 5 | 4 |
| 1976-80 | 20 | 8 | 14 | 7 |
| TOTALS | 42 | 22 | 20 | 16 |
| | 64% | | 36% | |

Automobile ownership is a high priority item for most males and this seems to be true in this study. A total of 64% of the subjects owned an automobile; 32% did not have an automobile, however, many of those students indicated an automobile was one of their desires.

| CONTINUOUSLY EMPLOYED SINCE GRADUATION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | Housewives |
| 1966-70 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| 1971-75 | 16 | 4 | 3 |
| 1976-80 | 28 | 9 | 3 |
| TOTALS | 48% | 16% | 11% |

A total of 75 percent of the 100 graduates of the workstudy program were employed continuously from their first job placements up to the time of this study. Many subjects changed jobs, however, they did continue to provide support for themselves since their first employment opportunity.

| EMPLOYED SUBJECTS WITH SPORATIC WORK EXPERIENCES | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females |
| 1966-70 | 3 | 3 |
| 1971-75 | 2 | 4 |
| 1976-80 | 2 | 0 |
| TOTALS | 7% | 7% |

The total of workstudy subjects presently employed would include both those working continuously since graduation and those presently employed but with sporatic employment histories. The total of presently employed workstudy graduates would then be reported as 55 males and 34 females, bringing the total of employed workstudy graduates to a final total of 89 percent.

| SUBJECTS UNEMPLOYED OR IN WORKSHOPS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | | Females | |
| | Unemployed | Workshop | Unemployed | Workshop |
| 1966-70 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1971-75 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 1976-80 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| TOTALS | 3% | 4% | | 4% |

These eleven students represent the 11 percent of workstudy graduates considered to be unemployed because they are not in the competitive market place as established by the workstudy guidelines.

To summarize the data on employment of the graduates of the workstudy program: 89% employed, 3% unemployed, and 8% in sheltered workshop setting.

| WORKSTUDY GRADUATES ANNUAL WAGES | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females |
| 1966-70 | Range 22,000 to 5,095<br>Median 8,164<br>Mean 12,412 (N=7) | Range 11,146 to 6,448<br>Median 8,173<br>Mean 8,475 (N=6) |
| 1971-75 | Range 24,537 to 5,252<br>Median 9,360<br>Mean 9,912 (N=18) | Range 9,280 to 6,448<br>Median 6,968<br>Mean 7,189 (N=8) |
| 1976-80 | Range 17,240 to 3,528<br>Median 8,678<br>Mean 9,511 (N=30) | Range 8,528 to 6,136<br>Median 8,216<br>Mean 7,658 (N=8) |

A very few of the subjects are earning a very high amount of wages because of advanced training which tends to inflate the data.

The workstudy program requires that the student be placed on a job which pays at least minimum wage and the data reflects that most of the graduates have annual incomes of approximately $8,500 for males and $7,000 to $8,000 for females. The female graduates have much lower annual incomes compared to the males. The data also reflects a fixation of earning power with the median earnings in this affluent area remaining rather stable over the years for the special education graduate.

Further, the stability of the subjects in their job placements have been surprizing. Many subjects have held their same jobs for many years. The years on the same job begin at 13, 11, 10 and many have held the same job for 8 or more years. Many subjects are in union jobs and are now at their maximum earning power in their positions. Also, by remaining in the same geographic area and with their parents support and encouragement have tended to remain on jobs to which they have now built competence. If they were to shift jobs, their earning power would probably decrease. Those subjects who changed jobs had much lower wages than those who stayed on the job over the years.

Those subjects inflating the data include the follow: Trained welders (3) with wages $24,537,22,000, and 17,160; Graduates of electronics institute (2) with wages $18,500 and 14,040; One subject has worked for the railroad for 13 years.

Other subjects having high earnings include a General Motors assembly line worker (8 years), Wonder Bread utility man on call for any emergency (10 years), and a female hospital worker (13 years).

The types of occupations held by the workstudy graduates were as follows:

1. FOOD SERVICE: (27 Subjects)
   - Dishwashers (11)
   - Waitresses (6)
   - Stock Clerk (3)
   - Cooks (3)
   - Produce (2)
   - Bakers (2)
2. HOMEMAKERS: (12)
3. ASSEMBLY (12)
   - Bench Work (5)
   - Machine Operator (3)
   - Flyboy (1)
   - Dock Worker (1)
   - Packers (1)
   - Loading Dock (1)
4. CLERICAL: (10)
   - Clerk (7)
   - Shipping (2)
   - Messenger (1)
5. MAINTENANCE: (9)
   - Custodians (9)
6. SHELTERED WORKSHOP: (8)
7. TRANSPORTATION: (8)
   - Mechanics Helper (3)
   - Truck Driver (2)
   - Fork Lift Operators (2)
   - Railroad worker (1)
8. WELDING: (6)
9. PERSONAL SERVICES: (5)
   - Hospital (2)
   - Hotel Maids (2)
   - Landscape Worker (1)

The graduates of the workstudy program were asked to respond to the question "What are your hopes for the future?" Their responses were factored into the following:

18 Keep or improve on my job.
15 Get married and have children.
12 Buy a home or automobile.
10 Have my own apartment.
5 Get a better job.
4 Save money.
3 Get a different occupation.

Other interesting responses which could not be factored included:

"Go back to school" "To buy a trailer, get married, improve my working on the job and write songs." "Just progress." "Be a millionaire." "work hard and be a member of a rock group." "To move out of this City and State." "Get our own house paid for, get our two kids through school, and buy a car so I would not have to depend on my husband to give me a ride whenever I have to go somewhere."

The second question addressed to the graduates was "What did you like most about school?" Their responses were factored into the following areas:

22 <u>The workstudy program</u>: "It helped in getting get a job." "Being in special education classes." "Vocational Rehabilitation helped me get a job and money." "Learning to work and to get a job."

16 <u>Teachers</u>: 'Mrs. K" A great variety of teachers were named with emphasis placed on the special education teachers and vocational rehabilitation counselors.

16 Classes: Shop (3), Math (3), Reading (3), English (2), Writing, Spelling, Track, and Gym (1 each).

9 School Itself: "The extra special attention we received to help us understand more clearly." "Going to North Kansas City and had a great time." "Everything." "The teachers helped me and so did my friends."

The last question asked of the graduates was "What do you think were the most unpleasant aspects of school?" Answers were factored into the following:

25 NOTHING: "nothing was unpleasant" "I liked school very much--school is nice to be in." "Leaving my friends." "Can't think of a thing."

22 VARIOUS CLASSES: Gym (6), Math (3), Home work (2), Music (2), Spelling, tests, Typing, Drivers Education, Art, Reading, Home making, classwork, and "Lunch, nasty" each received one mention.

6 NAME CALLING - TEASING (6) "Kids picking on me." "Kids making fun of me." "There were some people who were unpleasant." "There were times when there was a lot of name calling in the halls but soon learned to over look what they had to say."

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS: "The hard work." "Being sent to the office" "A teacher who was on my back" "Battling every day." "Being in special education." "Getting kicked out and getting detention hours." "Snow on the ground." "Being sent to the office." "Didn't like school."

# SUMMARY

The data presented in this follow-up of the graduates of the Workstudy Program for the mildly mentally retarded of the North Kansas City Public School District of Missouri from 1966 to 1980 may be summarized as follows:

1. A sample of 100 (62 males and 38 females) from a population of just over 300 provided this data.
2. Sixty four subjects were unmarried. Of the 36 who married, 11 were later divorced, 3 later remarried.
3. The 36 graduates that married produced a total of 35 children. Although 17 couples had no children, no family produced more than 4 children and the average number of children for these 17 couples was 2.
4. Sixty four percent of the subjects had their own automobile.
5. Fifty six percent of the subjects lived with their parents, 30 percent rented and 12 percent owned their own homes.
6. Since their graduation from school, 75 percent of the subjects had an unbroken, continuous record of employment.
7. Eighty nine percent of the subjects were employed with 8 percent in sheltered workshops, and 3 percent unemployed.
8. The 1980 salaries for males averaged from $8,000 to $9,000; females salaries averaged from $7,000 to $8,000.
9. The types of occupations held were factored to: food service (27), homemakers (12), assembly line (12), clerical (10), maintenance (9), sheltered worksop (8), transportation (8), welding (6) and personal services with (5).
10. The graduates expressed a liking for the workstudy program, most of their teachers, and did not complain about their years in school. They did express concern about others teasing or mistreating them and they had a long list of regular classes that they did not like. Their hopes for the future centered around doing well on the job, purchasing a car and home, and getting married.

The graduates of the workstudy program in the North Kansas City School District have apparently taken advantage of many fortunate circumstances afforded them. The North Kansas City Schools presented these students with a unified curriculum from the earliest grades through to the workstudy job placement phase. The vocational adjustment coordinator for the North Kansas City Schools has championed the work-study program for fifteen years and provides the energy, talent and stability essential to have great success. The workstudy program and the vocational rehabilitation services work closely together to ensure success for the student. And, the workstudy student is located in a geographic area which offers a great variety of occupations and the opportunity to earn an excellent income. Finally, the parents of the students have in most cases lent support to the workstudy program and guidance to their handicapped child. The results of a program with school, parent, community support appear to be quite satisfactory. The graduates of the workstudy program are to be congratulated for their success and we thank them for allowing us to pry into their business.